

NEW BOOKS.

As Between Dick and His Uncle.

Dialogue is an admirable vehicle for many kinds of impressions. We cannot think indifferently of it when we recall the dialogues of Plato and those of Dolly, to say nothing of the Ibsen dialogues, for which some hardy adventurers have been known to thank Heaven. We have marked at several places the abundant dialogue in Mr. Mark Lee Luther's story of love and politics called "The Mastery" (The Macmillan Company). In the opening chapter we find Philip Drew and his nephew, rattling young Dick Harris, conversing on a Hudson River day boat. Philip is not old, though an uncle. Dick speaks:

"An uncle with a street railway franchise can give a fairly good mother and card and spades."

"It's not ours yet."

"It's as good as ours with you pushing it, Philip. What you want you generally get. Maybe when I'm a simon pure magnate, I'll want a jobless Katharine will design to wear a solitaire."

Drew smiled indulgently over at the wholesome, clean cut young fellow. He had been favored with many bulletins of this particular love affair since its tropic beginnings at a watering place two summers ago.

"Then it's not a bona-fide engagement yet?" he asked.

"I consider it an engagement. Katharine calls it an understanding. She told before she went to that New York finishing school."

"And now, Dick?"

"Now it's a misunderstanding, apparently. She has me guessing. It's rather strange you two have never met, lacking her father politically as long as you have."

"Men don't mix their families with their politics much. Besides, I've never been a carpet knight."

"That's just why you'll like her," Dick argued. "Crusty bachelors are her specialty. Katharine's had an odd training. Barring those two years in the New York school, her father has had her education in his own, and this summer she actually served awhile as his private secretary. You'd look to find a bluestocking in the daughter of a man old-fashioned enough to quote Horace in the United States Senate nowadays."

"Well, the illogical fact is that she's the jolliest blend of nonsense and home sense sweet-and-twenty ever embodied."

"Hear! hear!" Drew applauded.

"Scott, you cynic, scold! We're younger than you."

It will be seen that this dialogue is not exactly like any of those others that we have mentioned. It is not profound, not particularly tripping and brilliant, not and wonderful and queer. No great thought and labor seem to have been expended upon it; still it is illuminative. It foreshadows the motives of the story—politics and love. After it, we are bound to say, nothing that happens is particularly surprising. Katharine, the Senator's daughter, her school education amended and solidified by the Senator's own special teachings, did not find Dick's uncle impossible old; we knew she wouldn't. As to the comparative chances of Dick and Katharine, what could any reader think after the catboat accident on page 30?

The storm came up with much suddenness. Violent lightning rent the leaden sky. The "dread organ note" of the thunder shook the souls of the people in the boat. "With a muffled exclamation Drew sprang for the peak beyond. Katharine dropped to the tiller, her face gone white."

"We must huff before it strikes," she called. "There's no time to lower the sheet."

"There was time for nothing. For a little moment the pines on the great cliff droned like a giant bagpipe under the blackening sky, the eerie sound swelling in volume, with added voices from rock and gorge and stream, till all Well's Head seemed to snarl. Then the storm leaped full upon them. As he clung to the drunken mast, blinded by the furious onslaught of wind and rain, Drew saw what happened but dimly. It was a blurred series of instantaneous pictures; a straining sheet—two huddled forms in the cockpit—a girl's chalky face at the tiller—parting halcyons, a wildly jibbing boom; then the Hudson closed over them."

Whatever Katharine meant by "lowering the sheet," it was plainly a pity that that needed maneuvering could not have been performed. We wish also that it might have been explained. Any huffing that may have been accomplished was obviously futile, since they were now in the river. Drew mounted to the keel of the inverted boat, whither Dick and Harriet Reeves had already clambered, and looked about for Katharine. She was nowhere to be seen. "The three peered and shouted together, but the gale jammed their voices back in their teeth."

We were not exactly afraid that the tale was to be deprived of a heroine at page 30, but we chivered a little notwithstanding. We felt that there was work cut out for a hero, and we said to ourselves that we should now see whether it was to be Dick or his uncle. This point was speedily made plain. We read: "Drew crawled further up the hull and shook the water from his eyes. Then his glance traversed the flattened sail, comprehending, and instantly died."

He found himself enveloped in a highly contrasting great silence. "It was as still as the grave underneath after the outer tumult; cold as the grave were the fingers that met his. For a fearful instant, even, the grave's pallor seemed to have set its stamp upon the face he saw when sight again was possible; but clinging with his burden to the slippery gunwale—an odd place to cling to, with the lean bottom up—he beheld the shut eyelids flutter, half open, droop languidly, then part wide. Katharine's eyes met his own. 'You do live!' he cried. 'Thank God! Thank God!'"

We were abundantly satisfied at this point as to whether it was to be Dick or his uncle, but the next few lines emphasize the already strong impression. She tried to explain to Dick's uncle that she had been stunned by the boom. He commanded her to rest. "She obeyed him like a child, closing her eyes. Presently, on hearing Harriet's voice, she opened them again and looked at the girl as, supported by Dick, she kept her uncertain perch. For an instant, also, her glance rested upon Dick, who called to her some cheery incoherence, to which she made no reply. Then her look came back to the man in the hollow of whose arm she lay. 'It was plucky of you to dive,' she said slowly. 'You saved my life.' It was nothing. Anybody could have done it." "You did," she answered, and her eyes again sought Dick." Any reader who thinks that Dick, sitting up there on the keel and holding sedulously the dependent and fair Harriet, had any chance from that surcharged moment with the heroine of this story is so credulous that we can only wonder at him and wish he might have been wiser.

Dick's uncle had some unusually sharp

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